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Approved For Release 2004/05/25 : CIA-RDP69B00369R000200300044-3

A Plea to Goldberg

Poison Gas in Yemen

By Roscoe Drummond

ARTHUR J. GOLDBERG,
U.S. AMBASSADOR TO
UNITED NATIONS.

Dear Mr. Ambassador:

In your recent statement you express "strong concern" over Egypt's use of poison gas in Yemen, but announce that the United States "is not taking the lead" in bringing the issue before the United Nations.



In all candor, Mr. Ambassador, why not?

You say "we are deeply disturbed" but prefer to let somebody else take the initiative.

In all candor, is a let-somebody-else-do-it policy good enough for the United States in America in a matter which involves violation of the Geneva Treaty, transgression of the U.N. Charter, and a heinous offense against humanity?

Isn't this the kind of international crime which the U.N. was created to deal with and which the U.N. is capable of dealing with?

But the U.N. can do nothing unless the issue is brought before it.

Is it really good enough for the United States to pur-

sue a course of let-somebody-else-do-it?

YOU KNOW as do the rest of us that under present circumstances nobody else is going to do it.

The Yemeni people who are being gas-bombed can't get their protest to the U.N. because their government does not represent them. The present Yemeni government either approves the use of poison gas against its dissident people or is so completely the tool of Cairo that it can't do otherwise.

And it seems clear that no other government is going to stand up first at the U.N.—at least not in time to accomplish anything—and say for the conscience of the world: This must stop!

NO ARAB state is going to do it. No neutral state is going to do it.

If there were a real choice between the United States "not taking the lead," as you put it, and somebody else doing so, it might be understandable for the United States to yield the initiative to another.

But, Mr. Ambassador, there is no such choice. Nobody else is ready to take the lead. Nothing is being done and nothing is going to be done to demand an end to this hideous crime unless the United States takes the lead to demand that something be done.

To any objective observer the facts are not in dispute. The on-the-spot investigations by medical teams of the International Red Cross confirm the repeated use of poison gas against soldiers and civilians in villages held by the Yemeni rebels. The gas has been delivered to its targets by Soviet planes flown by Egyptian pilots.

Not a very pretty situation. It cries out for U.N. action. The people of the poisoned Yemeni villages have cried out for U.N. help.

THERE HAS BEEN no U.N. action. There has been no U.N. help despite the fact that the Geneva convention is being broken, the U.N. Charter flouted and human-

At the moment a voice or two is being raised by Arab leaders urging Nasser to get out of Yemen entirely, withdraw his 25,000 troops and end his illegal intervention. But exactly such an agreement was signed by the U.A.R. and Saudi Arabia and nothing came of it. Perhaps the losses sustained by Egypt in the six-day war with Israel will force Nasser to retire from Yemen—for a time. But you can't count on it.

The issue remains: Nasser's pilots flying Soviet-provided planes have been repeatedly using poison gas against Yemeni villages. Is the U.N. going to stand by and let the resolution against the use of poison gas, which it once passed overwhelmingly, lie in tatters?

Is the United States going to stand by and refuse to take the initiative on the sterile theory of let-somebody-else-do-it?

Mr. Ambassador, there are quite a few of us who hope not.